



ARMED FORCES

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ARMED FORCES

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Cover Picture:

One of the South African Navy's Minister Class missile boats at sea.

Photo: H. Heitman.

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EDITORIAL:

Since 1975, when we started publication, Armed Forces has continually carried the view that, if the Soviets have their way and that if their forward strategic planning is implemented, their aim to develop a Vietnam situation, if they deem it necessary in Southern Africa will be achieved. To date the Soviet tactics have followed the prescribed line, similar to most of their other operations: they themselves have played a low key while their surrogates have taken the active role, ably supported by the international political left who have opened the doors and cultivated a suitable climate for their actions.

The military development in Southern Angola has to a large extent been based on the actions of the South West People's Organisation (SWAPO) with their many incursions into South West Africa that invoked the retaliatory actions by the South African Defence Force (SADF). This is a situation that has followed a continual pattern of escalation and not as some unthinking or irresponsible commentators have stated, to be on the decline. It became obvious that their operations out of Angola were being afforded the protection of the air defence umbrella that was being developed there with Soviet Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs). Any strike into Angola by units of the SADF would obviously have to be given air support and these aircraft would now become vulnerable to the SAMs. With an estimated hit ratio of at least 50% this was not on. And for the SADF to be able to continue to strike with Air-Cover at SWAPO bases in Angola it was necessary that the SAMs and their radar links were taken out, an operation that could most successfully be undertaken by ground forces. The result being an escalation of the situation by the actions of the SADF acting under conditions created by Moscow. Southern Africa is neatly brought to the boil by remote control with the object of causing the fall of the next domino, South West Africa and the creation of the next Marxist State - Namibia.

The ascendance of reality over that of liberal thinking in Washington is having apparent effects on political trends in Southern Africa and it is probably that the hold-ups in the independence programme set for South West Africa stems from a US rethink on the situation. Under the existing conditions there is little doubt that any election that is held in South West Africa will result in a victory for SWAPO and the creation of another Marxist State along the Atlantic seaboard. This does not agree with US global strategy. A marxist Namibia would no doubt give sanctuary to the African National Congress (ANC) and with them carrying the banner for Moscow move the front another 1 000 kilometres or so further south. How Botswana would react after being virtually surrounded by Marxist States is also a matter of conjecture!

Any miscalculations about the influence that SWAPO's propaganda is having on the large semi-illiterate and illiterate section of the South West electorate could be disastrous. This has happened time and time again when the power of the gun on the "peasant type population" has been both underestimated and not professionally countered. Presumably a running play-back is being maintained and an adequate counter programme is being implemented. Costs in this type of propaganda war are incidental specially when compared with those involved in a shooting war. A recent visitor to the Republic was General William Westmoreland who as Commander in Chief in Vietnam had the propaganda war at home lost for him which resulted in the subsequent withdrawal of the US forces from South East Asia and a communist Vietnam. General Westmoreland places the highest priority on the need for credibility in the war against enemy propaganda and emphasized this a number of times during discussion. A study of what happened in Vietnam and the realisation that over confidence can spell disaster in a number of spheres in this type of situation, is what is needed.

THE EDITOR

OMAY TRIBAL TRUST LAND

Northwest Rhodesia – South of Lake Kariba

Incidents from the Rhodesian War

These incidents are true – names, dates, places are sometimes changed as the persons involved may not want attention drawn to themselves.

The 20 ft boat moved round the point, its twin Volvo Penta engines idling at 400 rpm. The man sitting forward near the 0,50 calibre Browning, scoured the shoreline with 8 x 50 binoculars. A small herd of elephant standing in the shallows, some buffalo hidden in the mopani trees two hundred yards away. The boat circled in the bay, following a gentle curve round the masses of Kariba weed. The weed prevented approach to the shoreline at this point.

Suddenly "crack crack crack crack - - - -", a short burst of automatic rifle fire from a single AK scattered past the boat. The cox opened the throttle wide, swung the wheel to port, and surged away under full power. The 0,50 gunner in the bow moved behind this heavy weapon and switched on the optical sight. The two men amidships likewise leapt to their machine guns.

After initial supposition that the firing had come from land, the five man crew argued that somehow the source must be much closer. One of the rotten tree trunks sticking up through the clear water – the only rocky outcrop visible? No. They moved slowly back again. Some of the Kariba weed, about 60 yards away, seemed surprisingly bulky.

The 45" barrel of the Browning swung round. Viv Elliott, glanced through the illuminated gunsight – a red-orange circle with a single dot in the centre. A New Zealand Air Force, Mk 21 sight, refurbished from the Second World War and now equipping a boat on Lake Kariba.

The dot centred on the mass of floating vegetation – he squeezed his thumb and fingers together – the trigger bar lifted away from the sear. A fountain of water and weed erupted round the target. Two Africans seemingly dived through the spray. A 15 ft canoe was now clearly visible, despite the remnants of camouflage still adhering to it.

The rain of bullets continued. As the army boat circled to port, the starboard MAG gunner joined in as well. Suddenly the canoe lifted crazily on one end – the stern section continued to rise. Then the craft began slipping slowly under. The guns stopped firing, as the Engineers swung back to grab the canoe. Too late. It descended to the depths in a cloud of bubbles.

One African bobbing in the water. He was hauled aboard. His immediate request for "a cigarette please", received an Uzzi barrel across the face in answer.

The boat drifted. The canoe had sunk with unbelievable speed, due to the weight of war materials it carried. Suddenly behind them, some bubbles of air rose to surface – then a second cluster, some pieces of wood, a water bottle, a bundle of clothing. The crew were pleased. Elliott had been reading "The Cruel Sea", so could appreciate the analogy with a submarine Compass Rose had sunk.

They tried to mark the place. Deep water despite being an inlet. The Kariba chart showed 30 fathoms. Viv tied a marker buoy to some of the weed, and then for the first time it seriously occurred to him, that there might be a second canoe in the vicinity. The only reason the first one had been discovered, was because a single terrorist panicked and opened fire.

The captured terrorist sitting at the bottom of the boat was extremely lucky to be alive. He revealed that there had been five others in the canoe. Incredibly they had all gone down with it. In fact not all. Something they had overlooked, a nylon jacket barely visible. They moved over and pulled a second terrorist aboard. Not a scratch on him. Drowned.



these people showed little interest in any "Liberation War". Their whole concern was to eke out an existence from their loved waters and worshipping the river gods. Back in 1968, a single terrorist had established himself in one of the kraals, his SKS backing up every demand. One night a senior Batonka headman, had buried a hoe in the sleeping terrorist's skull. He had then transported the body wrapped in sacking on a bicycle, 60 miles to the District Commissioner at Gokwe. After explaining the circumstances, he expected imprisonment at the very least. A surprised Batonka returned to his village with £100, and instructions to kill any other 'gandanges' who subsequently pitched up.

The search by INTAF, revealed one place where a group of men had come ashore. They hadn't been too careful in covering the landing, and their canoe was discovered sunken about 20 yards offshore. Evidently some intended returning.

Tracks from this part of the gang were lost going inland. The one captured terrorist later admitted that they were to be based at a place called Tundazi, some 20 miles from the Lake. This is the name of a spectacular peak, 4 702 ft high at the eastern end of the Sijarira Plateau – a game reserve. It is a symbolic mountain, with access to the summit via a knife edge ridge on the western side. The army had a radio relay station on top at one time, and a soldier had been killed falling over backwards, whilst trying to beat out flames from a small scrub fire. A vertical fall of 300 ft.

Chief Siabuwa was the local chief in Southern Omay. His home and base, being Siabuwa Trading Store with its petrol pumps. He ran an admirable business, since his store formed the next supply point on from Binga 50 miles away. Any afternoon the chief could be found sitting crosslegged on the verandah of his home. Friends welcome. They always received the same hospitality. A full bottle of cane or vodka handed to the newcomer, along with an Italian crystal glass. In the centre of a circle of happy drinkers would be a crate of ice cold Castle.

Most people favour a beer-lemonade shandy on hot days. Siabuwa's speciality – cane or vodka diluted with beer. No accounting for the taste of people who spend their lives in the Zambezi Valley.

Accorn (CID/SB representatives) arrived at the store. They exchanged pleasantries with the inebriated old chief. The comings and goings of either SF members or terrorists, mattered little to him. Both sides could spend money as they pleased. The running of his store, a veritable gold mine, was conducted by a wife and two brothers. With the three of them responsible, he could be fairly sure that there would be some check on the cash turnover.

The Accorn detachment checked the ID's of all persons. They noted one particular taxi driver with a Peugeot 403, who did a phenomenal mileage in the area. Considering the state of the roads, it remained a miracle that the car stayed together. A suspect character. Police hadn't managed to pin anything on him, yet on three occasions, plain clothes Africans had obtained lifts. Too crafty to let on anything about Zipra activities.

In a backroom, the police attention was drawn to a suitcase sitting up on a shelf. They called one of the two brothers. "Which suitcase?" He looked puzzled. This was Charlie's room, a youth home from Que Que for the school holidays. He shrugged his shoulders, stood on a chair, and thinking it was empty started to lift it off. Surprise genuine – that suitcase was heavy. He got it down and opened it. The contents brought anger to his face. Nine tablets of soap, nine tubes of toothpaste, nine packets of razor blades . . . even nine ball point pens. He started swearing and yelled for the youth to appear. It was evident this man saw no connection between the contents and any terrorist presence – unless he was deserving of a five star award for acting. Charles had vanished.

Subsequent information indicated that the terrorist gang was hiding up somewhere in the Sengwa Gorge, nine miles from the store. The Gorge is one of the most impressive, if least known beauty spots in Rhodesia – excusing its harshness. It is formed where the Sengwa River breaks through the 900 ft Sijarira Plateau. The river cutting through in narrow winding channels has left vertical cliffs for those 900 ft. Secondly ravines fall back off the main one. The length of the gorge is seven miles, and somewhere in it was the gang's hideout.

Lieutenant Pete Hutchings glanced ahead in the dark. It should be reaching the track within a hundred yards. Sure enough, something resembling a road appeared in the headlights. His other two vehicles closed up. They turned off. The lieutenant checked the mileometer. A distance of 4.8 miles, then his soldiers would have to de-buss and cover nearly the same distance again on foot.

After four miles, Hutchings decided, as the bush seemed to be getting thicker, to look out of the ring turret in the roof. He stood up and started to open the hatch – all his weight being taken on his feet. "Boomp". A landmine exploded under the front left wheel. The armour plating beneath the cab, held the blast, but the intensity of the shock wave broke bones in both his legs. Hutchings sank back onto his seat realising that the terrorists had set the mine merely as a warning device, in case anyone should try to get round behind them. They had certainly succeeded, and would be well awake by now.

Both entrances to the gorge were covered by about 30 men. On the northern side, near the concrete causeway, two Elands had their 90 mm cannons and both machine guns trained up the gorge. The armoured car men longed to pull off a few rounds with their big guns, as there was little doubt, that wherever the shells exploded, there would be some magnificent rock falls. On the southern side, there was not the same accessibility for vehicles, but a strong security force contingent had walked in. They lined the walls of the exit.

The terrorists broke camp soon after their mine went off, and hurried the three miles northwards to escape. They had one man some 100 yards ahead of the main group, an expert in night movement. Within 400 yards of the armoured cars, he saw the glow of a cigarette from one of the sentries. That was enough, he turned back to his companions. The only way out for them, was up one of the elephant paths. Incredible as it may seem, the elephants had for centuries made their way in and out of the gorge, by climbing its near vertical sides. How they could keep their balance defies credulity. The gang had reconnoitred one path for just such an emergency.

Before starting the difficult ascent, they abandoned some equipment, mostly ammunition. Only an hour before dawn. They had to get away quickly. Nine desperate Zipra members.

Dawn came. The choppers arrived from Binga airstrip. A long convoy of RLI troops was also on its way. Two Alouettes' airlifted in National Parks personnel, whose camps were on the far side (west) of the game reserve at Manzituba.

The nine terrorists were up on the plateau. No African villages about. Although they did not realise it, they hadn't long to survive.

Within two hours of sunrise, the terrorist camp had been found. An obvious place in the gorge, overlooking one of the remnant dry season pools. Still some green vegetation remaining. Their sleeping places were above the riverine pathway. Twenty feet higher still a stone embrasure had been built. In that embrasure, the RPO machine gun. An admirable weapons pit, giving a good field of fire towards both approaches of the camp. A small hole had been dug for refuse nearby. In the fire place awaiting burning, was a tourist brochure of Malindi Beach, Kenya.

Derek Naylor a National Parks ranger, moved swiftly over the gently rolling plateau. Thin but sinewy, he wore a pair of shorts and black hockey boots. Slung across his right shoulder and passing beneath his left arm, a canvas ammo pouch – six extra magazines for an old and battered FN rifle. No hat, no shirt, no long trousers, no heavy boots, not even a water bottle. Derek's life was the Sijarira Plateau and its animals.

Accompanying Derek was his own African, Sibanda. The pair moved ahead of a 20 strong stick of RLI troops. Despite the fact that they were examining spoor, the soldiers struggled to keep up. Two lads dropped out, and it was all the remaining eighteen could do, to keep going.

Derek and Musonga had no trouble tracking the terrorists. Easy for them in the game reserve. The terrorists tried walking backwards for over a mile, but gave this up when they realised how much it was slowing them down. They trailed freshly cut branches behind them. They even drew lines similar to ant lion tracks across their footmarks, in an effort to pretend that they passed through at least 4-5 hours previously. In vain. The National Parks duo, barely concealed their scorn. Compared with them, the terrorists were amateurs indeed.

At three o'clock, both men stopped. Scent. Instinct. They moved cautiously, and their attention focussed on a thicket of trees in a small gully. They closed up. At a range of 20 yards, the sound of talking was clearly audible.

Derek and his African simply ran up into the middle of the trees. Sitting down in a half circle, were seven terrorists, staring open mouthed at the intruders of their luncheon.

The battered FN on repetition alone, fired. Twelve shots in five seconds. Each of the seven Zipra collected one or possibly two rounds – mostly through the head.

An AK then cracked from 80 yards away. More terrors. The next moment the Parks' men had to hurl themselves flat. Three MAG's and fifteen FN's opened up behind them. The 7,62 mm rounds came wining overhead like hail. Little branches and leaves floated down, falling on the pair and the seven dead terrorists.

The supporting troops had merely dropped flat when Derek fired his twelve rounds. However, with the subsequent burst of AS fire, they opened up with everything.

There was nothing Derek could do. For forty minutes, he lay there, until eventually verbal comms were restored, and the situation assessed.

It seemed that the remaining two terrorists had left the other seven for a few minutes, to decide on the route to be taken. They were about 80 yards ahead looking towards Lake Kariba. Hearing Derek's shots, they emptied off one magazine. Then, when the RLI fusillade broke out, the pair simply took off. No stopping for them.

Three evenings later, after reaching the lake shore, they commandeered a small boat at gunpoint, and taking the owner along, escaped back to Zambia.

At the op de-briefing, Derek Naylor congratulated on his fine achievement, remarked: "it was just like culling bushpig, we were in more danger from RLI than ever the terrors."

One of the war's more memorable statements. One of the great individual actions, by a man whose courage on this and other occasions, was to earn him the Bronze Cross.

New Developments from Thomson-CSF Planar Array Antenna

**From our British Defence
Correspondent who recently
visited the Company.**

Antennas are the major component of modern high performance radars, especially those concerned with air defence. Continuous development has taken place to improve their capabilities especially in poor conditions. Thomson-CSF of France are to show a new antenna of the most advanced design at Le Bourget. This is a high performance phase scanning array antenna which is intended for use with their 2215 D version of their TRS 2215 air defence radar. This unique planar array benefits from their experience in the manufacturing of the reflector-based TRS 2215 and in array antennas scanning in two planes. The planar array which makes up this new antenna is 5 m x 3 m and is of modular design. It is composed of 50 stacked distributors, the sources of these distributors are fed through a symmetrical wall-tree distributive circuit. This antenna, which is strictly non-frequency-dispersive in the azimuth plane, is compatible with true random-frequency transmission; this is not the case with the transmission mode of the large air defence radars known at present. This antenna has circularly polarised radiation which is of the utmost importance to a radar operating on the 10 cm band.

The 50 stacked distributors are formed into 25 'beams', each beam has two rows. The whole array can be folded horizontally in the middle for re-deployment. The system radiates in bursts at different frequencies. The width of the beam is 2 deg in elevation and the scanning is from -6 deg to plus 30 deg. The depression capability is useful when the array is sited on a hill or cliff top. The TRS 2215 D operates in the S-band. One of the principal advantages of this type of array is its very high resistance to electronic counter-measures.

Air-Ground Radio-SINTAC

Existing systems of communication are vulnerable to attack by enemy ECM. To obviate this Thomson-CSF have under development a new air-ground system called SINTAC; this is compatible with the JTIDS (Joint Tactical Information Data System) being developed in the United States. The SINTAC integrates into a common system the functions of navigation, identification (IFF) and communications, both speech and data. It is a one-way broadcast facility in contrast to the conventional system, which allocates a specific frequency to two correspondents. All system subscribers to SINTAC utilize in sequence the same group of frequencies between 969 and 1215 Mhz.

Each subscriber is connected into SINTAC only during a specific instant in time and can transmit only during his allocated time interval. The system is in effect a form of distributed time-division multiplex. No one subscriber or node is pre-eminent, the system simply places a group of time intervals at the collective disposal of all the subscribers. The time-division concept of SINTAC reduces its vulnerability to enemy ECM.

The brevity of each transmission associated with the varying time interval used and the frequency employed as well as the coding techniques makes enemy monitoring very improbable. A frequency-hopping scheme, plus the use of spread-spectrum techniques provides an effective defence against jamming.

The capability of exchanging a large amount of information and data in a very short time facilitates and expedites the interaction between pilots and controllers. SINTAC transmits repetitively format messages giving heading, altitude, and speed of the enemy aircraft to be intercepted plus its distance and course, while, at the same time, allowing air ground speech.

In addition to the obvious advantage of replacing the usual separate UHF, TACAN, SIF, IFF, VOR, DME and ILS systems SINTAC is able to operate in a very difficult electromagnetic Environment. SINTAC, and the US JTIDS, are enormous advances in communication techniques and will ease the considerable congestion on frequencies, and, coupled with data transmission at high burst speed, will mean more rapid, effective and secure communications.

